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ABSTRACT

The data gathered for this study supports the hypothesis that using journal writing, as a follow-up to reading literature, would improve second graders' ability to comprehend texts. The study compares the effects of journal writing and language-related activities on reading comprehension. Two groups of second graders were pre- and post-tested in October and in February, respectively. Initial scores of a Developmental Reading Assessment administered showed no significant difference between the means for both control and the experimental groups. The post-test scores showed significant difference between the experimental and control groups thus confirming the hypothesis that journal writing is an effective tool in improving second graders' comprehension of texts. Contains 17 references and 4 tables of data. Appendixes contain 4 student writing samples. (Author/RS)

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Second Graders' Use of Journal Writing and its effect on Reading Comprehension

By

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Dedication

To my husband, Emmanuel and our beautiful children, Kwaku, Julie, and Daniel -know that you are greatly appreciated for your patience through many writing projects that sometimes cut short my time with you.

Abstract

The data gathered for this study supports the hypothesis that using journal writing, as a follow up to reading literature would improve second graders' ability to comprehend texts. The study compares the effects of journal writing and language-related activities on reading comprehension. Two groups of second graders were pre- and post-tested in October and in February respectively. Initial scores of a Developmental Reading Assessment administered showed no significant difference between the means for both control and the experimental groups. The post-test scores showed significant difference between the experimental and control groups thus confirming the hypothesis that journal writing is an effective tool in improving second graders' comprehension of texts.

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The ability to read is vital to functioning effectively in every society. Every aspect of life involves reading. Menus in restaurants, labels on cans, road signs, signs on restrooms and many other situations require reading. As vital as functional reading is to living, it is also important for aesthetic pleasure. Whether text is read for functional purposes or for aesthetic value, the end product for both is communication. Communication depends on comprehension and comprehension involves much more than the simple decoding of symbols into sounds. The reader must be able to construct meaning while interacting with the printed page. Many readers may pronounce words perfectly but fail to comprehend what they read.

Research indicates that a child's achievement in reading and writing are generally quite strongly and positively related. Further, across evaluations of beginning reading programs, emphasis on writing activities is repeatedly shown to result in special gains in reading achievement (Chall and Jacobs, 1983). Through writing, children learn that text is voice and is not preordained or always the truth. Stotsky (1984), makes the point that better writers tend to read more than poor writers.

In recent years, many educators have viewed reading and writing as composing processes (Butler and Turbil, 1987). Based on prior knowledge, attitudes, and experiences, the reader constructs meaning from text and the writer composes meaningful text. Both reading and writing require the use of similar thinking skills, such as analyzing, selecting and organizing, inferencing, evaluating, problem

solving, making comparisons and so forth (Burns, Roe, Ross, 1996). If reading and writing are used for communicating and communication depends on comprehension, it stands to reason that writing can be an effective tool for enhancing comprehension. Englert, Kirschner, and Raphael (1988), in a research on reading and writing connections found out that students benefit greatly from learning to approach their reading as writers. Writing through journal approach allows students to record and reflect on their thoughts and ideas. Writers control the content by choosing their subjects and recording information as they please without concern for correctness of form or mechanics. They can also determine their audience.

When children enter first grade, they do so with an internal motivation to write (Graves, 1983). In addition to being motivated, children understand that written words have meaning. It is the responsibility of teachers then to further develop this understanding while at the same time build upon the motivation that most children naturally bring to the classroom. In the district in which this research takes place, these goals are being accomplished by implementing writing programs that use a holistic scoring. By second grade students can read and if not, will have acquired some skills that can help them read and understand what they read. Also by second grade, students will have used one form of journal response or another.

Writing in this research will take the form of a literary reading response journal, in which the students will record predictions about text to be read, and

write responses to text that has been read. The responses will receive the teacher's supportive feedback as a guide for further reading and also provide means for checking students' understanding of what has been read. Many response theories allege that a reader's construction of meaning from print is influenced by particular topic -i.e.- prior knowledge. factors including feeling and beliefs about a. Moreover a reader's response may change during the reading event. In this research, pre-writing activities such as activating prior knowledge, previewing, and predicting will take place. Purposes for reading will be set and students will use journal writing to record their predictions and purposes for reading so that they can refer to them as they read and build on them after reading.

Journal writing can be one of the myriad of instructional strategies that invite learners to explore and extend learning. These observations prompt questions such as the following: What effect does journal writing have on comprehension? How does the consistent use of journal writing impact on second graders' understanding of text, and how would it measure against other language related activities such as structural analysis, grammar and syntax in enhancing comprehension? It would seem that these language activities have been the only measure of assessing reading comprehension in the past. To bring assessment of reading comprehension in line with current views of the reading process, many educators are moving towards holistic assessment. This kind of assessment takes place during the teaching - learning process. It is also an integral part of the

curriculum (Burns, Roe & Ross, 1996). Holistic assessment treats oral and written language as an integral whole, not as recall or recognition of information. Bintz (2000) states that all too often, reading comprehension has been assessed based on the individual's ability to understand and recall an author's intended meanings. Journal writing, in which the writer is able to freely express his ideas and thoughts, may be the potential answer to the educator's quest to have learners become skilled information processors, complex thinkers and effective communicators.

Hypothesis

To add to the literature on this subject, the following research was undertaken. It was hypothesized that using journal writing as a follow up to reading literature would improve second graders' ability to comprehend texts.

Procedures

Students were given a pretest using a Developmental Reading Assessment kit (DRA) to determine each student's instructional level of reading. A result of this test is displayed in Table 1. The regular classroom teacher and the in-class support teacher worked together with the students in their normal reading and language class, which was fifty minutes each, giving a total of one hour and forty minutes everyday. A total of ten stories were used over a period of thirteen weeks. The stories were featured in lessons taught on Monday, Tuesday Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. At the end of the thirteen weeks, students' reading

comprehension was assessed using the DRA to measure gains in reading comprehension.

The stories used in this study were selections from the students' regular reading book and are grouped under three universal themes, that relate to all students' lives. The themes are (1) My family, friends and neighbors, (2) Nature at your door, and (3) Stretch your imagination. Four stories: *Matthew and Tilly; The Letter; Little Nino's Pizzeria*; and *A Birthday Basket for Tia* were featured under the theme, My family friends and neighbors. Three stories featured under the theme -Nature at your door- were *Nature spy, Home in the sky, and Dear Mr. Blueberry*. Lastly, three stories, *Julius, Truman's Aunt Farm*, and *Abuela* were featured in the theme, Stretch your imagination. These ten stories were chosen to help maintain children's interest, and ward off the boredom of staying with one story for too long. At the end of each theme, the teacher engaged students in a discussion that revisited the themes' highlights. All students, including the control and the experimental group was asked to draw the part that they really liked from their favorite story, and write a summary of what they drew. They were also asked to write a different ending to that story or any story of their choice from the same theme.

Lessons for all the stories engaged students in pre-reading activities such as activating prior knowledge, developing vocabulary, and previewing/prediction.

The class was split into two heterogeneous groups, each group comprising of eight students. Group A being the experimental group and Group B the control group. On the first day, all students were engaged in pre-reading activities and each story was read completely to them; students also listened to the story on tape (for reinforcement). After listening to the story, both groups received instruction in one comprehension strategy/skill per day. Skills that were taught included drawing conclusions, cause/effect, compare /contras', classify/categorize, sequencing, and problem/solution. These skills were taught to facilitate comprehension and to help the experimental group with ways in which to formulate their journal responses.

The experimental group was given different prompts every day, based on the aforementioned skills for their journal writing. Prompts also differed according to each story. Examples of prompts given are (a) What would you write in a letter to make a sad friend feel better? (b) Is finding a whale in your backyard really an example of nature at your door? (c) If you found a sick or lost animal, what would you do and why? (d) Discuss and write about which parts of the story are real and which parts are make-believe. The students were not restricted to the teacher's prompts. They were to be used as guidelines. Students were also invited to refer to the text as they wrote, but they were not to recount the plot as the teacher already knew the story. While students in the experimental group were involved in journal writing activities, the control group was involved with phonics, vocabulary, grammar, and spelling activities from their spelling, and practice books.

The in-class support teacher worked with the control group while the regular classroom teacher worked with the experimental group. As a model, the classroom teacher shared her own journal response writing about one of the stories read, and pointed out to the children that more importance was placed on recording of ideas rather than spelling or neatness. The students were directed to write as much as they could without paying too much attention to neatness or spelling. However if they needed to spell they were at liberty to use the word wall in the back of the classroom and/or their personal dictionaries. The teacher provided supportive feedback by writing in the students' journal, either commenting on or adding on to what the students have written. Students had the option to add on to the teacher's comments. Journal entries were then scored using a primary registered holistic scoring rubric, which focuses on four criteria : language level, message quality, directional principles, and spelling, and which contains a range of six point values.

Results

As can be seen in Table I, there was minor difference between the means of samples' achievement at the onset of the study and this difference was statistically not significant.

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and t of Samples' Pre-Experiment Scores

Sample	M	SD	t
Experimental	12.67	3.74	1.04
Control	10.57	3.84	

Table 2 contains the means, standard deviations, and samples of the post-test scores. As can be seen, the difference between the samples was highly significant below .005 and a highly significant gain of 6 points is evident.

Table 2
Means, Standard Deviations and t Scores of Samples' Post-Experiment Scores

Sample	M	SD	t
Experimental	22.00	4.80	3.27
Control	14.75	4.27	

Table 3 shows the difference between the means of samples' achievement of pre-test holistic scoring of writing samples. They are not similar in relationship to Language Arts on the onset. They are significantly different at the.05 level.

Table 3
Means, Standard Deviations and t of Samples' Pre-Experiment Holistic Scores

Sample	M	SD	t
Experimental	17.00	3.08	2.09
Control	13.75	3.33	

Table 4 reports the means and standard deviation and t of the post-Experiment Holistic scoring. Scores were highly significant at the .003 level. At the end, there is a 5.14 difference between samples. Both samples made gains. The experimental sample made a 4.8 gain and the control group made less than a 3-point gain.

Table 4
Means, Standard Deviations and t of Samples' Post-Experiment Holistic Scores

Sample	M	SD	t
Experimental	21.78	1.56	3.53
Control	16.63	4.07	

Conclusions

The data gathered supports the hypothesis that second graders' comprehension can be improved when journal writing is used as a follow up to reading literature. Students demonstrated through various writing assignments and informative journal entries, that effective communication took place between reader and text. The data from the holistic scoring of the experimental groups' samples, clearly show an improvement in students' vocabulary acquisition. This led to a higher message quality of journal responses. The data also shows that journal writing had a greater impact on second graders' understanding of text than did language-related activities.

Implications

In this research study, journal writing was pitted against the use of language-related activities in a comparison to see which was the most effective in fostering reading comprehension. Results showed journal writing as having a greater impact on reading comprehension. It is to be noted that most probably conduct lessons that lie somewhere between the use of journal writing and language activities day in and day out. Therefore if a typical teacher were to emphasize journal writing more strongly in a lesson, the changes in the children's performance may not be as pervasive as the ones observed in this study. Students in the experimental group demonstrated that journal writing could be a reading comprehension in itself even though it may be dependent on such variables as task and text.

The results of this study raise an interesting question. Why did students grouped heterogeneously in the experimental group manifest more learning ,as shown in the post-test than the control group? A plausible explanation is that journal writing afforded students the opportunity to link prior knowledge and present readings and perhaps draw conclusions that help with the understanding of texts and were provide the opportunity to put their conclusions and thoughts in print. Students in the control group treated to language activities did not have the opportunities to practice this skill even though lessons engaged all groups in pre-reading activities. It should be noted therefore, that using language-related activities alone as a post-reading activity makes it impossible for students to use their prior knowledge. Also using language-related alone is restrictive. Journal writing, conversely enjoys the benefit of incorporating prior knowledge and experience.

The use of thematic units learning units seems to play an important role in reading comprehension. The stories used in this research were grouped in themes that were all related to students' lives thus making it easier for students to connect to the themes and respond to them through journal writing. Thematic units allow students to bring their lives to their learning. Educators therefore should seriously consider using texts with real-life content and/or familiar themes in the reading class. In the story *Truman's* aunt farm, under the theme Stretch Your Imagination , a little boy, Truman receives an aunt farm instead of an ant farm as a birthday gift

from his favorite aunt. The aunts are so many that he decides to give them away to other children in need of aunts. One of the prompts given to the experimental group in the study requires them to give a different ending to the story. One student gave a very practical ending to the story relative to events at a real birthday party (See appendix 1).

The teacher's directions to children appear to influence what they write. Teachers, it seems, should be careful in assigning tasks to students. Guidelines and directions should be specific for students of all grades, especially, those in the lower grades. This should not only be in the reading class, but across other content areas, to ensure accurate completion of tasks. Primary-level teachers need to understand both the response process and the potential influence of the tasks they are assigned, in order to support children effectively. More research needs to be done in this area.

The use of immediate feedback is important. During this study, students were extremely excited about the teacher's supportive feedback on their journal entries. They were always anxious to read the teacher's comments and suggestions. Students looked disappointed on those days that the teacher was not able to give immediate feedback on their journal entries. Journal writing, therefore, can be seen as an effective tool in facilitating students' reading comprehension at the primary level, and most likely through other levels.

Journal Writing: Related Literature

Numerous studies have shown how reading and writing are closely linked. Accordingly they are mutually supportive and interactive of each other (Strictland, 1991; Teale &Sulzby, 1989). One other study however, asserts that even with that knowledge, many classroom teachers and reading teachers separate the two in their instruction (Bromley, 1989). She also maintains that in helping students to understand and experience the separate processes of reading and writing, teachers tend to overlook obvious and natural ways to make a real connection between the two. Connections need to be made between reading and writing for a number of reasons: firstly, we know that reading and writing occur simultaneously. Secondly, reading and writing reinforce each other, and thirdly, through reading and writing, language is used for communication. As students explore blended reading and writing activities, classrooms become literate communities where students become increasingly able to create and deal with extended texts of varying kinds (Bromley, 1989).

If reading and writing are reciprocal, then our intuitive sense of good pedagogy causes us to believe that some reading comprehension strategies could be applied to writing. For example R. J. Cantrell et al (2000) did a study to explore empirically, the effectiveness of two different forms of student journal writing on learning social studies. Each based on the K-W-L and the summary strategies. The results of this study revealed that, students who structured their journal responses according to the steps involved in the K-W-L comprehension

strategy made significant gains in their writing ability. Their journal entries became more reflective and positive. Reutzel and Cooter, (1999), cited Bromley, (1989) in an earlier study as saying that, students organize text information in a manner that is meaningful to them when writing summaries. They reveal how they selected information to construct their comprehension of text. Thus we can safely assume that when some comprehension strategies are combined with writing activities, it helps improve writing ability which in turn may improve their reading comprehension. The rationale behind the study of R. J. Cantrell et al (2000), was that they knew how useful Ogle's K-W-L strategy was in encouraging students to be more engaged and reflective before, during, and after reading text. They reasoned therefore that if students kept journals in a format that required students to activate their prior knowledge about a topic, set their own purposes for reading text, and then compared what they had learned to what they thought they knew and the questions they had asked, students should be more likely to learn from text.

Writing then can provide an important vantage point from which to develop an insight about students' reading ability. A research study by Langer(1996) in which a program, Expository Writing Program, was used, showed that students benefited greatly from learning to approach their reading as writers. Langer considered the relationship between reading and writing by examining knowledge, planning, purpose setting, metacognition, and other process variables during

carefully matched reading and writing activities.

One activity that makes the reading-writing connection real, natural, and meaningful and provides purposes for doing reading and writing together is the buddy journal (Bromley, 1989). The buddy journal is a procedure in which pair of students keep a diary together as they write back and forth to each other, "conversing" in writing. It is an outgrowth of the dialogue journal in which the student and the teacher converse in writing (Gambrell, 1985; Kraft, 1984; Roderick & Berman, 1984). The buddy journal is a natural way for students to integrate reading and writing in a purposeful and personally meaningful context. It requires students to read entries in order to write responses to a partner and can provide almost immediate feedback to written messages (Bromley, 1989). Another benefit of the buddy journal, Bromley maintains, is that it provides a real audience and gives students reasons to write legibly and coherently. Spelling, punctuation, and grammar can improve as students struggle to have their messages understood. Teachers however must provide alternate means of maintaining students' interest and become involved in journal writing themselves in order for the buddy system to succeed.

Mayher & Lester (1983), explain that in order to grow as readers, students must learn to use their own knowledge, experiences, and emotions to construct personal meaning and develop a sense of text ownership. Response journals, for example, consisting of students' comments about their reading and teachers'

replies, encourage engagement because they place students "at the center of their own learning" (Martin, D'Arcy, Newton, &Parker, 1976, p. 67). Another teacher/researcher asserts that "Literary journals offer students an active and concrete means of participating in text" (Tashlik, 1987, p. 177). Because they choose what to write about and how (Rupert & Brueggeman, 1986; Staton, 1988a), reading journals give students a voice in their work while empowering them to collaborate with the author in composing meaning. Because it encourages personal engagement in reading, journal writing helps students refine their understanding of texts and their control of the reading process. It also encourages readers to recognize, appreciate, and reflect upon their personal interpretations (Belanoff, 1987; Rupert &Brueggerman, 1986). Furthermore it helps develop awareness of *how* meaning is constructed during reading because it directs readers' attention to their thought processes and reveals these processes on paper. In short, researchers have shown that journals not only validate self-expression and personal response, but also encourage understanding, imagining, speculation, questioning, and the shaping of ideas. They also provide students with information relevant to their concerns and problems in the content of their own entries and their teachers responses (Atwell, 1987a, 1987b; Fulwiler, 1982; Mayher, Lester & Pradl, 1983; Staton, 1988b).

A fourth grade teacher (Wollman-Bonilla, 1989), explored how she could use a dialogue journal to improve literacy learning in her class. Her decision

to include writing in her reading program grew out of her belief that writing is a tool for thinking and learning (Vigotsky, 1962). The eight students she experimented with were slow readers, lacked confidence in their reading ability, had found few books, if any, that they liked, and only one of them chose to read books for enjoyment. In that study the students wrote responses to literature in the form of journal letters to the teacher. The teacher provided supportive feedback by replying to their letters positively without any criticisms or correction of the students' text. This treatment helped the students improve significantly in reading; and because there were no restriction placed on grammar, punctuation, or spelling, they were able to communicate effectively by taking risks, venturing new ideas and making personal meaning.

Although reading and writing have unique aspects, the awareness of story structure seems to contribute to achievement in either area. Squire (1983), explained that language processing is fundamental to both as are constructing and reconstructing ideas, acquiring and using of sources, and information from a variety of sources, and applying knowledge of how text is structured. Text structures, described by several researchers include comparison /contrast, cause/effect, description, problem/solution, drawing conclusion, fantasy/reality, sequencing and others. A study conducted by Anderson, Armbruster, and Ostertag (1989), attributed the problem of students' inability to read and comprehend

content area texts, to lack of knowledge of text structure. Indeed, studies by Raphael, Kirschner, and Englert (1988), have shown that a writing program that includes instruction in specific expository text structures can improve both writing and reading comprehension. The results of an experiment, in which the instruction of the problem/solution structure was applied, showed significant improvement in students' reading comprehension and writing. The instruction followed principles of explicit or direct instruction (e.g., Duffy & Roehler, 1982). That is, the instruction featured teacher modeling of explicitly defined procedures, plenty of guided practice on the increasingly longer and more difficult passages of the text, teacher monitoring with corrective feedback, and independent practice. This research project showed that students can be taught simple text structures that will help them write and read expository text more meaningfully. According to Elkino (1976) and Ribovich (1977), students who have many opportunities to structure their own ideas in writing will more likely be able to recognize the structure of other authors when they read.

Other research on reading and writing has emphasized the sharing of product knowledge (Shanahan, 1988). Here, product relations include phonemic awareness, word structures, cohesion, and passage organization. It becomes important then to discuss the role of cohesion in reading and writing. It is the linking of the elements of the text through repetition (or redundancy) of information at the semantic, syntactic, and discourse levels. Common sense,

considerable research, and linguistic theory suggest that cohesion plays a critical role in language use and communication (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Cohesion is important both to the reader in constructing the meaning from a text and to the writer in creating a text that can be easily comprehended. Cohesive devices include pronouns, referents, ellipsis, pronouns, conjunctions, and so forth. They appear to be critical in determining the clarity, appropriateness, and comprehensibility- that is, the quality- of an author's writing (Halliday, 1985; Halliday & Hasan, 1976) and knowledge about them is related to children's developing reading and writing ability.

Another important factor of the reading-writing relationship is the use of the background knowledge and personal experience. "We know that children like adults, respond to literature according to their experiences and their world perspective (Lehr, Thompson, 2000)." These two researchers point out that children use their own world views to interpret problems that characters face, and that provides a lens for understanding the diversity of journal responses. They assert also that children build meaning interactively, by using personal experiences to make connections. Some low-achieving students may benefit from an initial introduction to story structure by writing about their own experiences and by reliance on their own experiences rather than literature. Reliance on personal experience may be pivotal to an understanding of story structure (Nagy, 1997). She also contends that engaging in writing activities centering on student'own

problems, produce a high level of participation and promotes memory of story structure.

Writing can be narrative or expository. Narration is more familiar to children than exposition because they have many opportunities to read and listen to stories both at school and at home (Cox, Shanahan & Sulzby, 1990). A conclusion of a research by Raphael, Kirscher & Englert, (1998) is that when poor readers are taught how to write and edit various types of expository text, they also improve in their comprehension of content area textbooks. Freewriting, which is a form of written response, involves writing quickly without stopping for a specified length of time, and without editing for quality or correctness (Bintz, 2000). Tasks in writing can be assigned or open. Newton, Stegmeier, and Padak (1999) believe that both task and text influence children's responses. Asking children to write what they remember prompts one set of written response; asking them to write what they think or feel prompts another. It behooves the teacher then to pay careful attention to what tasks or directions they give to children, as what they direct children to do influence what they write.

Study after study highlights that reading and writing are so closely related that their curricular combination could have a positive outcome in terms of achievement or instructional efficiency (Shanahan, 1980; Stosky, 1983). It should be obvious then, that reading and writing do not overlap sufficiently to

permit complete reading and writing development through an instructional emphasis on one or the other (Shanahan, 1988). Therefore if writing is going to be learned, it will need more instructional emphasis than it has often received in the past. Instruction should reflect the developmental nature of the reading -writing relationship because they are both learned over time, and the nature of what is learned at one point can be very different from what is learned at another. For example most schools employ basal reading series, with the idea that, in the primary grades especially, students need to learn to recognize a useful set of gradually introduced words. These words are usually taught through a small amount of direct instruction, followed by frequent exposure to the words through repetition in the stories. Teachers can increase the possibility that children will learn this vocabulary for writing, by increasing writing activities.

What other advantages do writing give to readers trying to make meaning of text? Results of Blintz's (2000) research on freewriting revealed that freewriting enabled readers not only to hear different voices, including their own, but also to assume a position or take a stance. That is, freewriting allowed them to better understand what they currently know, how they came to know it, and why they continue to believe it. This form of writing then enabled students to actively participate in a process of meaning making that involved taking stances, shifting stances, and taking new stances as they reflected on their own voices, as well as

that of the author and the instructor. Other theories allege that a reader's response may change frequently and dramatically during a reading event. Rosenblatt (1978) later introduced the concept of stance, arguing that readers approach text aesthetically or efferentially. Other studies on writing show that it increases vocabulary acquisition, which is one determining factor of comprehension. It is also considered as the traditional benchmark for comprehension. Current advances in holistic scoring emphasize writing as a new potential for solving an old problem in reading assessment. Dialogue journals are a powerful tool in helping one assess and develop students' reading (Wolman-Bonilla, 1989).

In a previously mentioned study in which dialogue journals were used to determine a student's growth in reading, the results showed that students in the experimental group's reading comprehension strategies were enhanced; and because journals did not involve right answers, there was less fear of being wrong and greater willingness to explore ideas and tackle difficulties. The teacher/researcher's replies to the students' journal entries allowed her to collaborate with students, support their efforts, and help them to recognize and understand what they could not grasp alone (Vigotsky, 1978). By writing and receiving the teacher/researcher's supportive feedback, the students recognized that they were able to respond, independent of given questions and that their personal responses were valued. The result was a new view of self as a reader. Frank Smith

(1988), suggests that in order to become readers, students must feel they are members of the "literacy club". There is no harm, then, in inviting students to join this "club" through journal writing!

Although there is abundant research on how independent reading and writing are of each other, there is little substantial research on how all of the aforementioned studies can be adapted to help second grade students who are trying to make meaning of text. When instruction in both areas are enhanced and properly correlated during literacy instruction; when second graders feel unthreatened in their written expression, they will make more effort to write. Increased efforts thereby will result in success and will make it worthwhile researching how using journal writing as a follow up to reading literature would improve second graders' ability to comprehend text.

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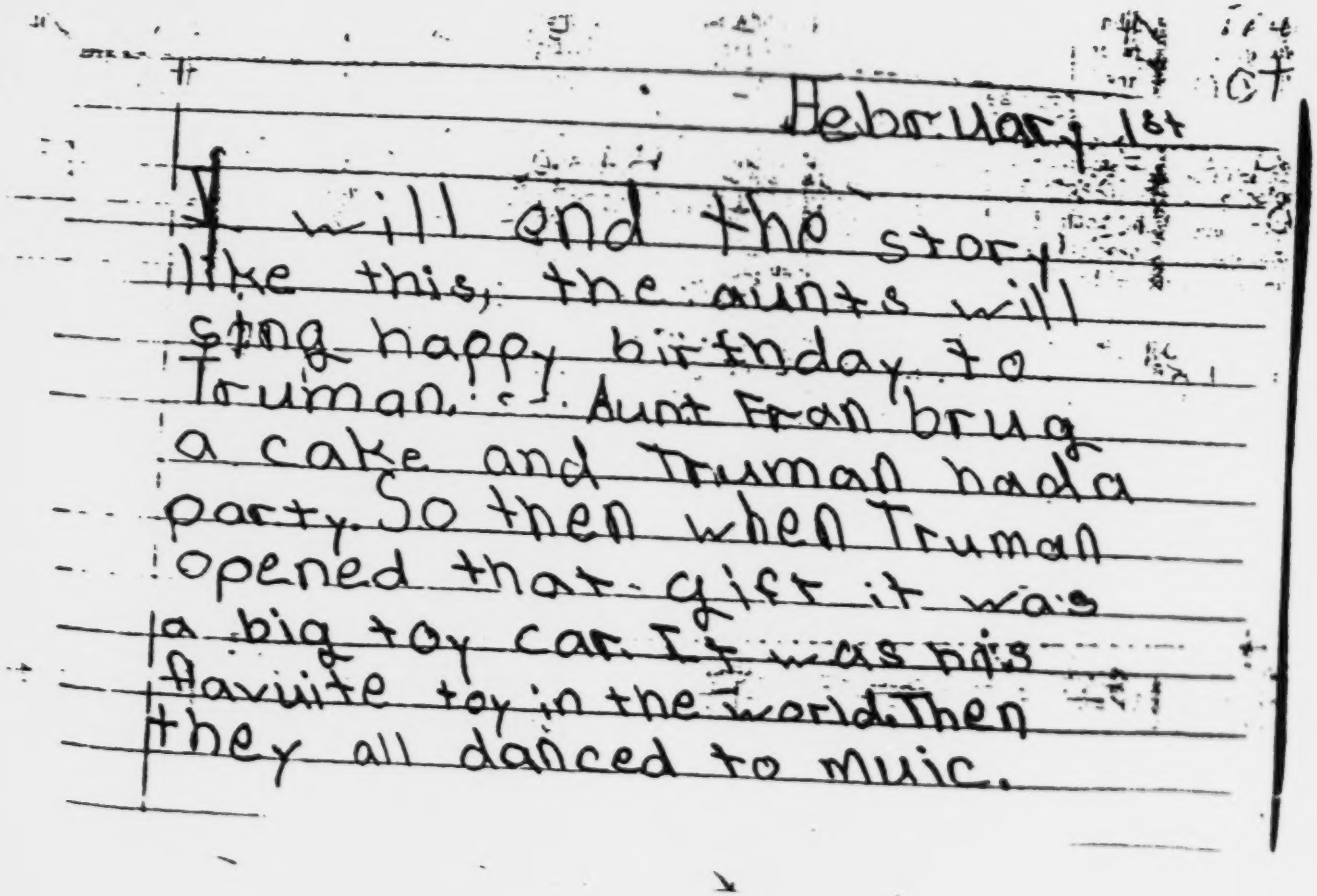
Appendices

Appendix 1

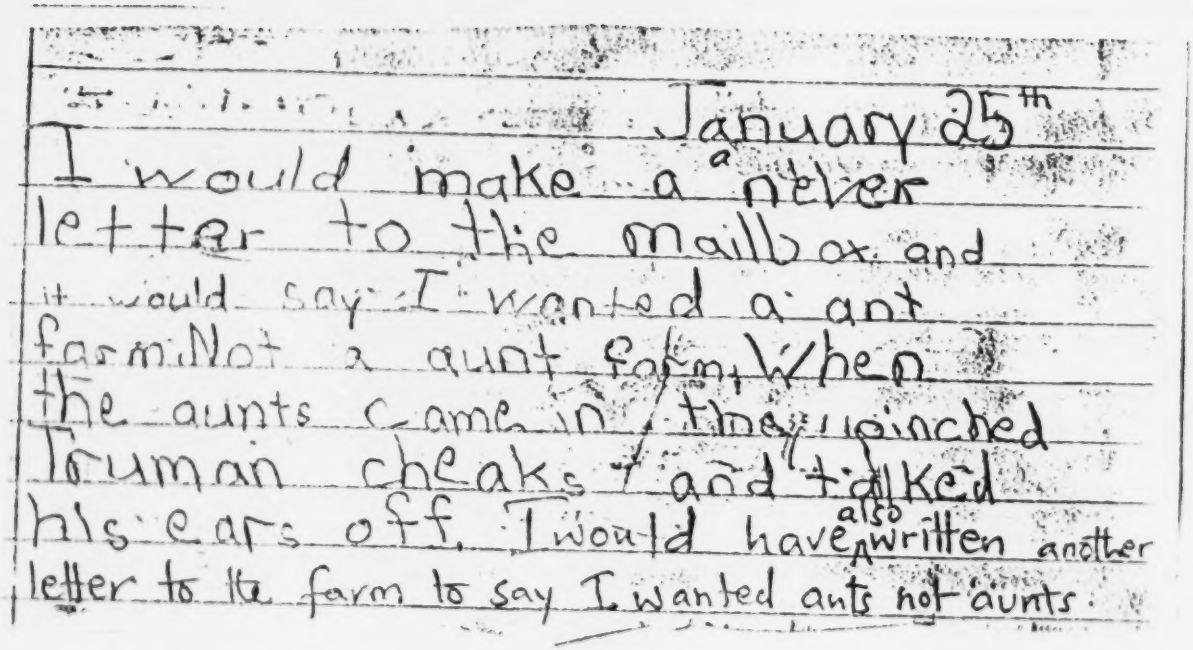


February 1st

I will end the story like this, the aunts will sing happy birthday to Truman. :) Aunt Fran brug a cake and Truman nada party. So then when Truman opened that gift it was a big toy car. It was his faviute toy in the world. Then they all danced to muic.

How would you end the story of *Trumans' aunt farm* differently ?

Appendix 2


January 25th
I would make a ntter
letter to the mailbox and
it would say: I wanted a ant
farm. Not a aunt farm. When
the aunts came in they pinched
Truman cheaks and talked
his ears off. I would have also written another
letter to the farm to say I wanted ants not aunts.

How would you end the story of *Trumans' aunt farm* differently ?

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I think that Mr. Blueberry should not believed Emily because a whale cannot live in a pond. Emily likes whales and she saw a whale in her pond. Blueberry had sent Emily some information. He said But Emily there is not a whale in your pond perhaps it is a blue goose. I must point out now a whale cannot live in your pond.

I agree with you too, but I guess he had to continue to give her the information on whales so that she would stop imagining seeing a whale in her pond.

Response to the prompt : Should Mr. Blueberry have believed Emily?

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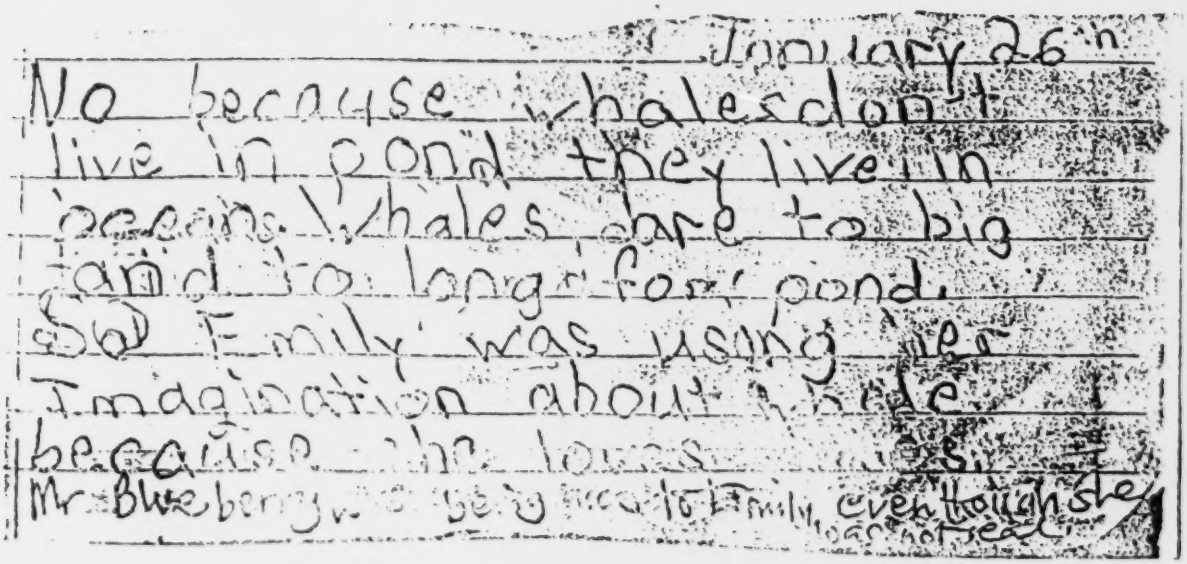
Appendix 4


January 26th
No because whales don't
live in pond they live in
oceans. Whales are to big
and to longer for pond.
So Emily was using her
Imagination about whale
because she loves
Mr Blueberry would be glad to Emily even though she

Response to the prompt: Should Mr. Blueberry have believed Emily?

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